

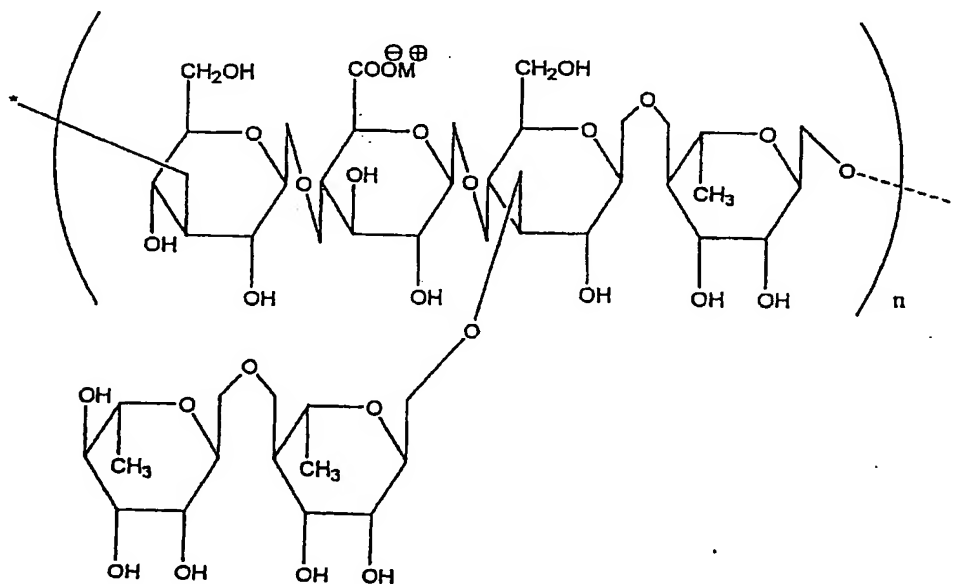
AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A water-based ink composition characterized by containing 0.01 to 1.0 % by weight of high molecular saccharides represented by Formula 1 (wherein M represents alkali metal or alkaline earth metal selected from the group consisting of sodium, potassium and $\frac{1}{2}$ calcium, and n is 10^2 to 10^{10} , and having a molecular weight of 10^5 to 10^{13}) as an essential component in the ink composition:

Formula 1



2. (Original) A ballpoint pen prepared by charging an ink reservoir with the water-based ink composition as described in claim 1.